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Notes [June 1980]

Ben G. Ohlander

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NOTES

GYRAFALCONS, PRAIRIE FALCONS. Of great interest are reports again this season of Gyrafalcons in Nebraska. At least three confirmed sightings were reported by knowledgeable individuals. First, Gary and Jackie Ohman, of Battle Creek, sighted an immature gray phase male Gyrafalcon about 3 miles west of Thedford, Thomas Co., on 25 September 1979. On 11 November 1979 I observed an immature male gray phase Gyrafalcon about 12 miles southwest of Minden, Kearney Co. I was able to approach as close as 20 feet from the bird in my car. A third reported sighting occurred in early December 1979 about 4 miles west of Sutton, Clay Co. This was a light phase male Gyrfalcon which was sighted by Bill Niehus, of LaVista, and Brad Mitchell, of Richfield.

Additionally, Niehus and Mitchell made an interesting series of observations regarding migratory and feeding behaviour of wintering Prairie Falcons. Immediately following a major snow storm in early December 1979, with snow cover extending east to the Minden area, but with little snow east of there, they drove country roads between York and Minden. During a day and a half they sighted over 30 different Prairie Falcons. Very many wintering Horned Larks and other birds were sighted in this area extending from the snow line east, and the Falcons had a bountiful food supply. However, west of this snow line only a few Falcons were sighted in correlation with fewer observed Larks.

— Ben G. Ohlander, 9808 Browne Street, Omaha, 68134

Mr. Ohlander later reported that the Ohmans took the bird mentioned above, but while they were flying it, it lit on a power pole and was electrocuted. Mr. Burton Nelson of the Hastings Museum reported that the Game and Parks Commission gave the body to the Museum on 8 March 1980, and that it is now on display there.